



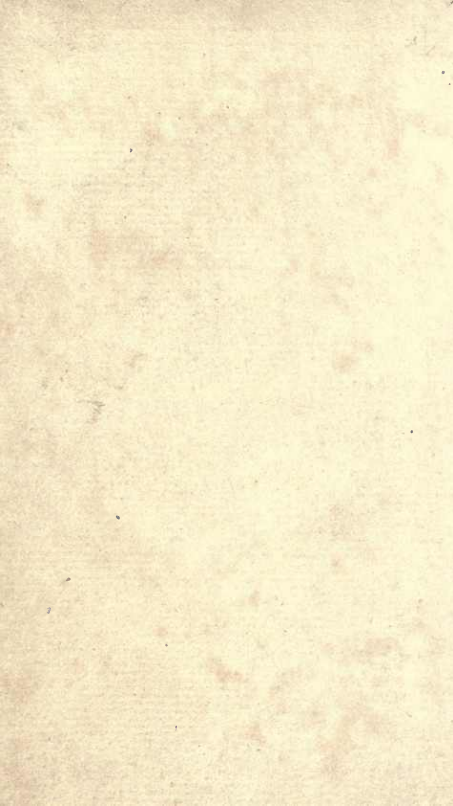
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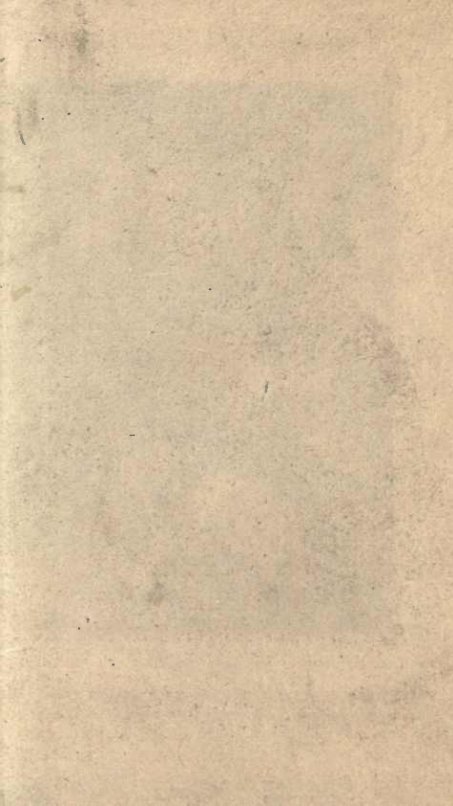
CHILDREN'S BOOK  
COLLECTION



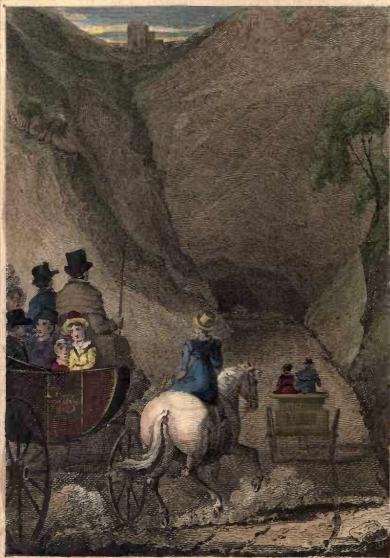
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Frontispiece to "The Buxton Diamonds"



The next day our juvenile party made an excursion to Castleton, and visited the far-famed Peak.

*see page 91.*

THE  
BUXTON DIAMONDS;

OR,  
**Grateful Ellen.**

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FOR THE  
AMUSEMENT AND INSTRUCTION  
OF  
**CHILDREN.**

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*LONDON:*

WILLIAM DARTON, 58, HOLBORN HILL.





THE  
**BUXTON DIAMONDS,**

&c.

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THE birds were singing songs of joy in the grove, the sun shone brightly in the clear blue sky, the little buds of the larch began to emerge from the pink-coloured shields in which they had been long embosomed, the flowers prepared to expand their gay blossoms, the young lambs skipped about in the mea-

#### 4 THE BUXTON DIAMONDS.

dows, and all nature appeared smiling in gladness and beauty. It was on this delightful morning that Maria drew up the window-curtains in her sister's room, exclaiming at the same time:—"Rise, my dear Emily! It is high time to rise! papa is already gone to take his daily walk on the terrace, and we have to visit Poole's Hole before breakfast, you know. Emily instantly obeyed her sister's summons; but, before she was half dressed, a gay little party burst into the room, some of whom were

clad in thin muslin frocks and habiliments suited to the season, whilst the elder ones were muffled up in great coats and thick shoes, as though it had been a very cold day in December. "Oh, Fanny, what are you thinking of, to put on your great cloth coat upon such a beautiful morning as this!" exclaimed Emily in surprise; "surely you forget that it is the first of May! And you, Lucy, are you actually following Fanny's example? Just look out of the window, and see how brightly the sun

shines," continued she, drawing aside the white curtains. "I see that the sun is shining, my dear Emily," said Fanny, "but I intend to wear my great-coat notwithstanding. You know prudence is a quality that mamma highly recommends to our notice; and, when you consider that we are about to explore a damp gloomy cavern, you will acknowledge that prudent foresight induced me to wear it in preference to a thin muslin frock." Emily smiled, nodded assent, put on her own

great-coat without farther debate, and the lively party set off for Poole's Hole across some fields, in which a little foot-path would conduct them to the desired spot.

And now it seems necessary to give some little explanation of these proceedings, of Poole's Hole, &c., and of the young party whom we will suppose are, in the mean time, bending their way towards it. Derbyshire is a county abounding in subterranean beauties; (by *subterranean* we mean *underground*, as *sub* signifies

*under*, and *terra* signifies *ground*,) and some of its caverns are of amazing depth and extent, enveloped in eternal gloom, and far secluded from the cheerful light of day; in some of these immense excavations the crags impend so low that those who wish to explore them must creep along on their hands and knees, or submit to be ferried along between rock and water in little flat-bottomed boats, guided by the faint glimmering of torches, whose light seems only sufficient

to heighten the darkness around, or at least to render it still more imposing. The mineralogist and geologist may be highly gratified by a visit to some of these caverns, as they afford various specimens for the cabinet, and will afford them ample opportunity for enlarging the scope of their knowledge. By *mineralogist* we mean one who is fond of mineralogy, a science relating to the study of minerals, which include all earths, soils, stones, and metals; in fact, every thing that is neither animal

nor vegetable must be mineral. By *geologist*, we mean one who is conversant with the various strata or layers of different matters, of which the body of the earth is composed. Buxton is a fashionable watering-place in Derbyshire, and much resorted to on account of the beneficial effect its warm springs have upon invalids. The country around it is almost destitute of sylvan beauty, consisting chiefly of wild barren hills and moors, unadorned sometimes for miles together by a single



tree; yet the place itself is rendered interesting from its vicinity to the far-famed Peak, and other caverns; and, indeed, the little shrubberies of firs and larches which are now being planted among the hills, will soon improve their desolate aspect, and we shall gladly acknowledge with the poet;

“New woods aspiring clothe the hills with  
 green,  
 Smooth slope the lawns, the gray rock  
 peeps between,  
 Relenting nature gives her hand to taste,  
 And health and beauty crown the laughing  
 waste.”

The salubrity of the air and

waters of Buxton induced a gentleman, with his family, to take up his residence for a few weeks at this place, in hopes of benefiting his health, which had long been in a delicate state; and, as his children had resided in a part of the country where there were no such things as subterranean excavations, they were highly delighted with the novelty of the various scenes that fell under their notice. Poole's Hole is a cavern within half a mile of Buxton; and, although not so extensive as some, is

well worthy of notice, as being an entirely natural excavation, whilst others have undergone considerable changes by art. You enter it by a long narrow passage, perhaps seventy or eighty yards in length, between immense masses of rock; the road then varies, and you are compelled to climb over huge fragments of limestone, rugged projecting crags now and then impeding your progress, or across slippery stones incrustated with stalagmites, which are excrescences, if we may use the term, formed by

the droppings of water during many revolving centuries. The water contains calcareous or earthy particles; and, consequently, drop after drop, as it falls from the roof in the same place, deposits or leaves some of these little particles, which, when exposed to the air, become hardened, and in time actually form masses of stone in the form of icicles, which hang suspended from the crags, and these are by the mineralogist termed *stalactites*. Sometimes—

“Rude rocks on rocks, confusedly hurled,  
The fragments of an earlier world,”—

strike the exploring wanderer with admiration and awe, and sometimes a bubbling torrent gushing down the steep sides, or trickling in the dark valley beneath him, excites emotions of wonder and surprise. All is cold, and dark, and gloomy, being far from the cheering light of day, and impenetrable to the brightest sunbeams, yet extremely interesting to those who are fond of nature, regardless whether it be clad in the light hue of gaiety and verdure, or attired in the melancholy gloom of

subterranean darkness. To every well-attuned mind, Nature, in all her varieties, is pleasing, and those who are willing to acknowledge that she—

“Is but the name

For an effect, whose cause is God,”—

must consider her interesting even in such a dreary and desolate excavation as that which goes by the name of Poole's Hole.

Having said so much by way of explanation, we will return to the juvenile party whom we left on their way to this celebrated spot. They

had crossed four or five fields, and turned up the little lane that leads to the entrance of the cave, when Lucy exclaimed,—“ But, who will conduct us through it? We cannot go in alone; perhaps we may be lost, and never find our way out again, and then what would mamma say? You, Fanny, with all your prudent foresight,—have you thought of this?” “ Yes,” replied Fanny, “ my foresight, as you call it, has taught me to consider that we must have a conductor, and I think we may probably



find one at yon little white-washed hut, under the hill: suppose we go and ask that old woman, in the blue bed-gown, if she will accompany us; she looks very much like one of the old women whom papa described as the guides." The children were going towards the white-washed cottage, when another old lady, of a like venerable aspect, habited in clothes befitting her employ, begged permission to attend the young people, saying she would take particular care to lead them aright, would point out



every "*curiosity*" worthy of notice, and was, in fact, better qualified for the job than any one else, having lived twenty-five years at the entrance of the cavern, and being thoroughly acquainted with every high-way and bye-way in it.

No further assurances were needed; but, as two guides, at least, are generally considered requisite, and as each person must be furnished with a lighted candle, they went on to the above-mentioned cottage, in quest of the old woman in the blue bed-gown,

as well as of torches. As they walked along, their conductor, perceiving her young auditors were kind, cheerful, and good-tempered, began with a frankness, perhaps, peculiar to the peasantry of Derbyshire, to give some little account of her life ; said that she had lost her husband by an accident in a lead-mine thirty years ago ; that he had had sufficient employment to maintain her ; but that, after his death, she was obliged to seek for some employ, to earn a little money to gain a livelihood, which now depended

solely upon her own industry. "There are six guides of us," said she, "who take it by turns to show gentry into the Hole, and we always divide whatever we receive, be it much or little, between us: that little is not much at any time, though; but I know very well that a contented mind is the greatest blessing I can have, and therefore I am very well satisfied, for it is far better than all the wealth and all the riches that all the Buxton diamonds could bring!" "You are very right, my good woman," said the

prudent Fanny, as she was designated by her lively sister; “but, surely, the little you earn in this manner is not sufficient to pay the rent of your cottage, and to provide you with proper food and fire, and clothing.”

The old woman was about to reply, but she was interrupted by Emily’s exclaiming, “What are Buxton diamonds? What do you mean by Buxton diamonds? Mamma has a diamond necklace, but it came from the East Indies; and she has diamonds set in her brooch, but they came from

the diamond-mine of Gani, in Hindoostan, or,—oh! no; from Golconda or Visapour, I am not certain which; but I never before heard of Buxton diamonds!" The poor old woman was rather disconcerted at the volubility with which Emily poured forth her enquiries and exclamations: she had never before heard either of Gani, or Golconda, or Visapour, and she was going to explain that the Buxton diamonds are little crystals found occasionally in the soil, of peculiar brilliancy and transpa-

rency, which entitles them to the name, when she was prevented by the appearance of one of the guides, whom we will, by way of distinction, call Dame Mitchell, and who came forward with a lighted candle in her hand, and four or five little tin candlesticks with a bit of candle in each, which she lighted, as soon as they had returned to the entrance of the Hole, and presented one by one to the young ladies. It had been previously agreed that the younger children should run about and gather flowers on

the green hill that overhangs the entrance, while their elder sisters explored the subterranean cavity; but, when Emily had proceeded about twenty yards along the dark narrow passage which must needs be explored, her courage forsook her; or, rather, the gloominess of the place, notwithstanding its novelty, together with the cold chill, occasioned by the sudden change from broad open day-light, threw a damp over her usually high spirits, and she acknowledged she had no longer any

inclination to proceed, but would prefer returning at once. So she retraced the narrow passage alone; and her heart resumed its wonted gaiety when she found herself again at the entrance, having left her sisters Fanny, Maria, Lucy, and Isabel, under the guidance of the old women, fully bent upon seeing all that could be seen, and on examining all that could be examined.

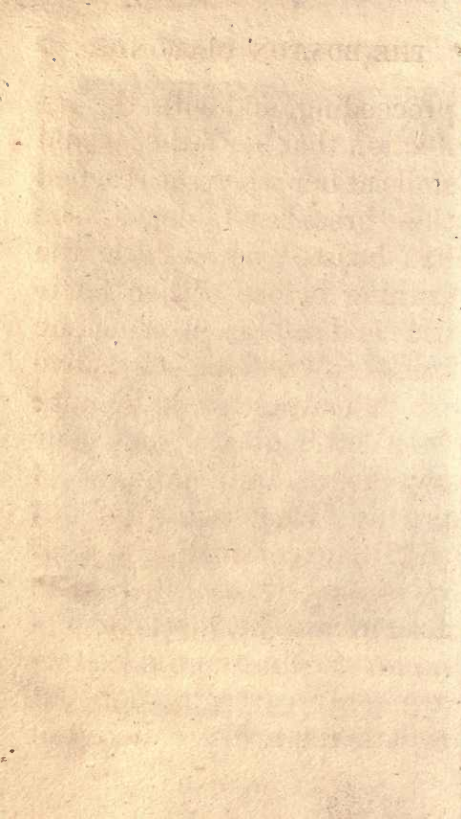
She sat down on a green hillock for a minute or two, at first gently reproaching herself for want of courage in not





So she retraced the narrow passage alone, and her heart resumed its wonted gaiety when she found herself again at the entrance.

*see page 26.*



proceeding, and with the reflection that her father would smile at her when she reached the breakfast-table, as she had boasted not a little the evening before of her fortitude and resolution, which she had then felt almost positive no difficulties could daunt: (how little do we know our own hearts, until brought to practise what we profess!) and then comforting herself by saying, “are there not around me beauties far superior to those exhibited in a gloomy cavern, where all is dark and dreary? here are

trees, and green hedges, and bleating lambs, and a clear blue sky, and flowers of every hue and fragrance ! how sweet the thyme smells ! how gaily that field is adorned with the yellow blossoms of the wild radish ! and how pretty are the milk-coloured blossoms of that wild creeping bind-weed ! but the dear little thyme delights me above all."

While Emily was thus musing on the beauty of the scenes around her, she was surprised to see smoke ascending, as if from the ground, at a little distance

from the spot where she sat ; and, apparently, from the very hillock of thyme which she had just been admiring. Her curiosity was excited, and she immediately arose ; and, advancing towards the spot, presently found that the supposed hillock was, in fact, a chimney, covered with turf, and overgrown with wild thyme. But how could a chimney come there ? and where could the house be ? as it was almost on a level with the ground. Although she had been daunted by the gloominess of the entrance

into Poole's Hole, she was generally accounted of an enterprising disposition, and she determined to descend a little cliff not far from the chimney; rationally concluding that a hut might be formed in the rock beneath the projecting point where she stood. So she put her plan into practice, and, having reached the bottom, found a little passage through an entrance in the rock; which, as it presented nothing formidable, and appeared but of short extent, she entered. It led to a hut scooped out

of the rock, consisting of three rooms, in one of which was a bright blazing peat-fire on the hearth, by which sat a girl, seemingly about thirteen or fourteen years of age, with a baby in her lap, and two or three more children prattling around her.

The ceiling, of course, was not very lofty, and, instead of being white-washed, as those of the cottages of the poor generally are, it was bare rock, and the ground was formed of a similar material; the windows were scooped out on the side

nearest the entrance, and the novel appearance of the little abode amused the lively Emily, while the children attracted her notice; and she immediately began to make enquiries respecting them and their house. The eldest girl, who, as we have said, appeared to be rather younger than Emily herself, informed her, in an agreeable tone, that the hill around the entrance into Poole's Hole consisted of limestone rock; that it went by the name of Grimlow Hill; and that many little abodes, similar to that



they were in, had been scooped by the labourers out of the rock, or formed beneath the heaps of lime-ashes, which had been thrown together and hardened upon it; “and so,” continued she, “when you are upon the hill, you would perceive the smoke of our little peat-fire rising, as it were, from the ground, without being able to tell where it came from.” “Yes,” said Emily, “that was what puzzled me; I saw the smoke ascend from a little hillock covered with thyme, around

which the lambs were grazing, without knowing whence it proceeded. I think this Grimlow Hill bears some resemblance to a rabbit-warren---a rabbit-warren is Grimlow Hill in miniature!---however, I am glad that I found my way to your hut. Pray, how long have you lived here,---and do you live by yourself,---and how do you earn a livelihood, ---how do you maintain all these little creatures?" "Oh, ma'am," said the girl, "we have lived here ever since my mother's death ; for, as

my father died some time before her, my grandmother took charge of us at that time, and we have lived with her ever since ; that is, three years come Whitsuntide ; and she is all that is kind and good : she is one of the guides into Poole's Hole, and she is now gone with Dame Mitchell to conduct a party of young ladies who wished to visit it." " They are my sisters," said Emily ; " I chose to ramble about Grimlow Hill in preference to entering the cavern ; but tell me, my good girl, how many

brothers and sisters you have: surely, what your grandmother gains, in the capacity of guide, cannot be sufficient to maintain you all! Does she pay any rent for the hut, and do you go to school any where?" "Grandmother lives here, rent free," said the girl; "for, as the hill and the ground hereabouts belongs to the Duke's estate, he says that, in consideration of the industry of those poor labourers who had scooped out their dwellings, they should live in them for nothing; and, as to our

maintenance," continued she, "why grandmother sometimes receives five shillings a week, as well as an occasional half-crown or so, given her by visitors who, like you, find their way to our hut. Then I do what I can by selling Buxton Diamonds, when I am so fortunate as to find any, (for they are only found at one or two places about three miles off,) and specimens of spar which the miners give me, as well as bits of rock, called ——, —indeed, ma'am, I forget their names,—they are found in the

cavern,—but I forget what they are called,—in order to gain a little money ; for I do, and I always intend to do, whatever I can for my poor grandmother, who so kindly took us to live with her at my mother's death, and at a time when we should have been sent to the workhouse, had she not come forward to our assistance and offered to maintain us by her own labour. I am in duty and in gratitude bound to do all I can, and, when I know that it is not her day to go into the cavern, (for each of the

guides have regular days,) I go to the hill where the diamonds are found, and procure all I can get, in order to sell them to the gentry at Buxton. They are rather difficult to be met with, by those who do not know the exact place where they are to be procured; so I sometimes sell them for as much as a shilling each; and I will tell *you*, though I do not let grandmother know it," continued she, encouraged by Emily's good-natured smile, "what I am about: last winter she suffered a

great deal from rheumatism, for, as we have only two sleeping-rooms, and there are seven of us, she chose to sleep herself in the outer room near the entrance, that the little ones might lie in the inner room, which is much warmer, but so small that it will but just hold one bed. The outer room was often cold and damp, but, as we could not all sleep in the inner one, grandmother would keep there, notwithstanding all I could say; but it would not have been quite so bad as it was



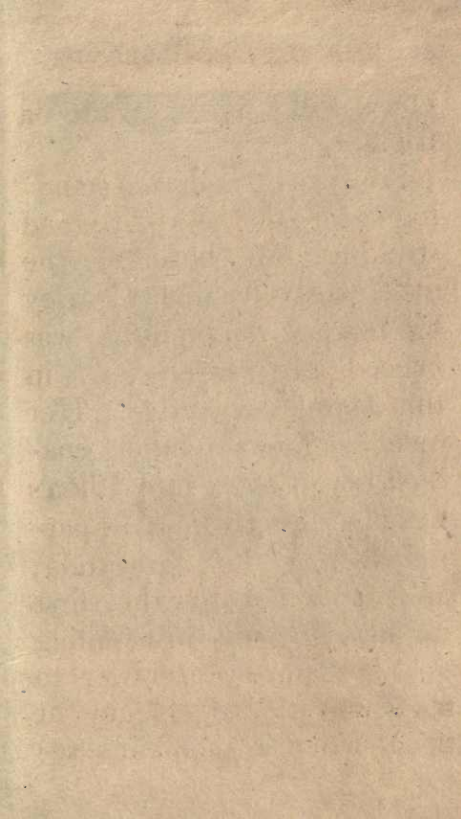
if she had had a proper pair of blankets to wrap herself up in ; but she was so afraid of little Charley's being ill, for he is but delicate, that she gave up her warmest blanket to wrap round him and Sarah, and kept only an old and very thin one for herself ; so, as I expect she will suffer the same inconvenience again next winter, I am doing all I can to earn money enough to buy a new pair for her before the frost sets in. I am told that they will cost fifteen shillings ; but I have already got five

towards that sum," continued she, reaching a little deal box from a hole in the rock. "To be sure I am in great want of a pair of shoes, which I know she cannot afford to buy; but I will do without my shoes, and even wear what I have with holes in, sooner than give up the blankets; she is so kind and so good, and takes such care of us, that it would be a shame not to show my gratitude by every means in my power. I do earn a little now and then by carding wool for the

spinners, certainly ; but that goes but a little way towards our livelihood. The money that I get for some of the Buxton Diamonds is truly my own ; and, as grandmother does not know what I am about, she will be quite surprised to find a nice new pair of blankets upon her little bed, and I shall be still more delighted than she can be, as it will give me an opportunity of convincing her that I am a grateful girl ; for I well remember my poor mammy used to say, “ Be grateful, my dear Ellen, and

you will never want a friend."

Emily, who had been standing near the peat-fire and stroking the head of the little curly-headed Charley for the last ten minutes, was exceedingly interested in this simple narrative. Her own generous temper enabled her to enter into Ellen's feelings directly, and to participate in her gratitude; and, actuated by the first impulse, she was just pulling out her purse, in order to make up the deficiency at once, when a moment's re-





— called, by way of distinction, "Charley's room,"  
and soon returned with her little treasures.

*see page 45.*

flection prevented her. "It will give her more pleasure," said she to herself, "to procure the blankets by her own industry than by the kindness of strangers." "Where are the Diamonds, my good girl?" continued she, "Will you allow me to look at them?" Ellen ascended two or three rough steps hewn in the rock that led up into the cavity, called, by way of distinction, "Charley's room," and soon returned with her little treasures. "I have only two diamonds at present," said

she, "and, as they are neither of them very good ones, I could not, in conscience, ask more than sixpence a-piece for them, but here are some bits of dog-tooth spar, which were brought me by one of the miners from the Mandale mine, and which are, I believe, thought valuable; here are also some of the bits of stone that come out of Poole's Hole." "Not bits of stone," said Emily, "but, more properly speaking, *stalactites*—(stalactites, papa says, mean incrustations formed by the droppings of water,



containing very minute particles of earth, which, being deposited together, in time form these little cakes of stone.") Perhaps Emily gave Ellen this explanation to try her attention, or perhaps to see whether she evinced any inclination to gain knowledge, for she appeared by her manners and conversation to be of a superior description to the general order of the children of Derbyshire miners, and gratified our young friend by thanking her, and promising to remember in future the

difficult word *stalactite*,—"For I shall, said she, "be more likely to remember it now that I know what it means, and also more likely to dispose of my specimens if I call them by their right names." Observing Emily was pleased with these specimens, she produced more. "Here," said she, "is a bit of *stuff* called *bitumen* by the miners, which came from the Odin mine; and here is a bit of *keble*, and a bit of *slickenside*, and a bit of *Blue John*." Though Emily knew something of mineralogy, she

was at a loss to understand what was meant by terms so entirely new to her; however, she purchased a specimen of each, (thinking it better to wait for an explanation till she reached home,) as well as the two diamonds, by which means Ellen's little treasure was increased to eight shillings. "I should like to purchase some more diamonds," said she, "and the very first time you have any to spare bring them to the Hall, where we are staying, and enquire for Miss Emily W., and I will promise to buy as many as

you can bring. I think my sisters are probably returned by this time, I will just put these specimens into my reticule, and then I must leave you; —Good bye.” As she spoke, she left the little hut, and ascended the winding path in the rock, up the gentle eminence she had before come down, then gathered a few fern leaves, which gréw in clusters on the summit, and placed them in her basket, between the specimens it contained, in order that they might not get rubbed together. No sooner was this

operation completed than the sound of merry voices announced that the little party had made their exit from the cavern that Emily had so much dreaded to enter. "Well, were you gratified?" said she, rising from her grassy seat, and advancing towards them; "Did you meet with any thing to alarm you? and was it worth seeing?" The many exclamations of joy at the appearance of broad open day-light, from those who had never in their lives been so far from it before for a time prevent-

ed Fanny, the eldest girl, from being heard, but as soon as they had a little subsided she expressed her regret that Emily had not accompanied them, saying, "You would have been highly amused, my dear, with the novelty of the place, as you have never seen any thing of the sort; the entrance was certainly low and contracted, but, as we advanced further, it expanded by degrees, and large rocky caverns appeared around us without number. When we had proceeded about five hundred yards, we came to

an immense mass of stalactite, which Dame Mitchell called the Queen of Scots' Pillar, from the tradition of the Queen having made a visit to this cavern, and advanced thus far into its recesses. Maria was very much inclined to out-do the Queen, by proceeding still further, but the guides assured her that as the pillar could not be passed without difficulty, few people venture beyond it; and that, indeed, the remaining part of the cavern offered few objects to repay the fatigue of exploring it; so we were obliged

to return." Emily felt rather vexed with herself, that Maria, whose courage was not generally surpassed by her own, had wished to do what she was even afraid of attempting; however, the thought of her new acquaintance in the hut reconciled her to the temporary mortification, and she good-humouredly joined in the laugh at her own cowardice.

As soon as they had left the guides, for she had not mentioned the circumstance while they were by, knowing that Ellen did not wish it to



be published, she gave her sisters a recital of the little events of the morning, and said she would show them her specimens when she reached the Hall, as they had just been laid in proper order in the basket. “But, did you see any Buxton Diamonds? did you find any spars or crystals in Poole’s Hole?” continued she. “No,” said Fanny; “the interior of this cavern is very inferior, in point of beauty and magnificence, to some I have visited, as there are neither spars nor crystals suspended from

the rocky roof; and the stalactites, some of which the old women knocked off with a small hammer or chisel, are all that it produces to gratify the lover of mineralogy. In the caverns at Matlock, on the contrary, we found many specimens of various minerals, particularly the ores of copper, lead, and zinc, as well as some curious crystallizations. But, of all the caverns I have visited in Derbyshire, that of the Peak at Castleton pleased me most, which I explored when I was here last summer." "Oh!

we will ask papa to take us to Castleton to-morrow," said several of the children. "Some of us can go in the carriage:" "and you, Fanny, can drive Maria and I in the poney-chaise," exclaimed one: "I will go on the barouche-box," said another; "and I," exclaimed Emily, "will ride the dun poney! I believe Castleton is ten miles from Buxton; but I rode eight miles together one day; and the dun poney canters so nicely that I dare say I can ride ten without being fatigued; and you will ride it back, and let me go in

the carriage,—will you not, Fanny? I know you will, because you are always good-natured.” “But, do you know,” said Fanny, laughing at the eulogium with which her sister had concluded her request, “Do you know what difficulties are to be encountered? You, who feared to enter the cavern, the *comparatively* little cavern of Poole’s Hole, what will you say to one of more than three times its extent, and in which the rocks in some parts project so low that you must needs creep on your hands and knees? and, then again, your

progress will be obstructed by water, across which, if you wish to proceed, you must be ferried in a little boat, beneath the projecting rock that almost touches you. Indeed, my dear Emily, I fancy that, if you were aware what formidable difficulties await your entrance into the Peak cavern, you would be inclined to ride the dun poney ten miles in another direction, sooner than undergo the mortification of being laughed at when you got there, for want of courage." "No, no!" said Emily, twitching her sisters'

hand, "I never intend to be laughed at again for want of courage, when there is in reality nothing to fear. But, will you, as we walk home, give us some little account of this celebrated cavern?"

"The Peak cavern," said Fanny, "is one of the principal wonders of Derbyshire; it is situated at a short distance from the village of Castleton. We approach it by a path along the side of a rivulet, which issues from it; this path leads first to a deep and gloomy recess, amidst rocks that rise to a great height on

either side. On the summit, to the left hand, the ruins of an ancient castle (said to be built by a son of William the Conqueror,) overhang the precipice; and, at the foot of the rock on the opposite side, the cavern opens in a magnificent manner. I scarcely know how to describe it to you, but its entrance is a stupendous canopy, scooped, as it were, though by the hand of Nature, out of a rock above forty feet high, and perhaps extending as much as, or more than, one hundred and twenty feet in width. In this vast

recess some twine-makers carry on their simple manufactory : a rope-walk in such a place, as well as the curious little abodes which are scooped out of the sides of the rock, like your hut on Grimlow hill, had a very singular effect, and diverted us not a little. When we had gone about thirty yards, a young girl made her appearance from one of these miserable abodes, begging leave to take charge of our bonnets while we entered the cavern, as it would be impossible, the guide said, to



wear them without injury. So we delivered them up to her care, and tied large coloured handkerchiefs, which we had the *prudent precaution* to take with us, round our heads, and then each, with a little tin candlestick and lighted candle in her hand, followed the guides down a gentle descent to the interior entrance of this tremendous hollow. I really believe you would scarcely have known us, so curiously were we attired, and so singular did we look. Here the blaze of day wholly disappeared, and the

further passage was to be explored by torch-light. The way became confined and narrow as we advanced, even more so than the entrance into Poole's Hole; and we were obliged to proceed in a stooping posture, twenty or thirty yards, till we came to a spacious opening, called the Bell House, from its form, when the rocks above our head again enabled us to stand upright. Beyond this the cavern seemed to be entirely closed in every part; but, upon a near approach to the rock, we discovered a

low passage under it, almost full of water. The opening was just large enough to admit a little flat-bottomed boat, full of nice clean straw ; but I know not, my dear Emily, how you would have felt, had you seen the guide pull off his shoes and stockings, and jump, *sans ceremonie*, into the water, begging that we would step gently into the boat, two at a time, and lay very still while he pushed us along about fourteen yards under the rock, which in one part descends to within eighteen or twenty inches of

the water. At first I own I drew back half afraid to encounter the formidable little voyage, so Richard and Edward jumped in, and presently landed in safety on the further side; then the little boat returned, and Mamma and I placed ourselves in the same station, with our torches in our hands, and soon received their congratulations upon our safe arrival. You see the best way of avoiding fear is not to indulge it, and, if we had had forty yards, or even four hundred, to go, in that little boat, I should have

considered myself amply repaid by the pleasures we enjoyed in exploring the remainder of this immense cavern." "Then, what did you come to?" enquired Emily, who had been listening with eager attention. "We came to a spacious vacuity," replied her sister, "which opens in the midst of the rocks; but, from want of light, neither the distant sides nor the roofs of it could be seen. We traversed it for more than two hundred yards, and then crossed a little bridge thrown over a torrent of water, and

descended a long passage into an aperture called Roger Rain's house." — "Roger Rain's house ! oh, what a droll name!" exclaimed Lucy. "Why, does it belong to Roger Rain; and who was he?" "It is merely a fanciful name given it by the guides, by way of distinction," replied her sister, "but may possibly owe its derivation to the circumstance that water is incessantly falling in large drops through the crevices of the roof," "Have these drops a petrifying quality?" asked Maria, "They possess a calcareous

deposit," said her sister, "and incrust the sides and prominent parts of the rocks with stalactites. I believe you know what is meant by this term, but can you explain the meaning of calcareous?" "Oh yes, I can tell that!" said Isabel, who was some years younger than Maria; "calcareous signifies earthy—the water contains very minute earthy particles." "And these being deposited, drop after drop, as the water falls from the roof," continued Fanny, "incrust the substance upon which they fall,

and, gradually hardening, produce those immense pendant masses, or, as you significantly term them, *stony icicles*, which you have been examining, with so much pleasure, this morning, in Poole's Hole." "Thank you," said Maria; "now, will you tell us where you went when you left Roger Rain's house." "Beyond this cavity," said Fanny, "opened another, termed the Chancel; and, while we were gazing around us in astonishment and awe, and vainly endeavouring to discover its extent, we were



surprised by a concert of melodious voices, which burst from the upper part of the chasm. It was totally unexpected, and, issuing from a place where all around was still as death, struck us with fear and pleasure, astonishment and delight. At the conclusion of the strain, and before we had had time to recollect where we were, or to imagine whence the sounds could proceed, the choristers became visible by the sudden illumination of their torches, and eight or ten young women appeared, ranged in the

hollow of the rock, which formed a sort of natural gallery, about fifty feet above the spot where we stood." "How curious,---how wonderful, it must have appeared!" said Emily, whose lively imagination immediately pictured the scene. "We must, indeed we must, go to-morrow, if it be only for the sake of hearing the singing girls," continued she, opening the little gate that led along the last field towards the Hall; 'but you have not quite finished your history, Fanny.' "We proceeded from one

cavity to another, some increasing in magnitude, and others in beauty," said her sister, "till we had reached the termination of the cavern, which extends seven hundred and fifty yards. We then returned by a different road: and never shall I forget the singular feeling occasioned by the sudden extinction of all our candles, when we were, though unconscious of it, within a few yards of the entrance; and one of the guides exclaimed in a loud tone—"Clasp each other by the hand, and let the first

take hold of me." So Richard, who was *forehorse of the team*, took hold of the guide; I clasped the hand of my brother Edward, pretty firmly as you may suppose; mamma took hold of mine, and all the rest followed in succession, not knowing in the least whither we were going, when, to our astonishment, the little door at the entrance suddenly opened; the darkness disappeared: day-light burst upon us; there were the children as busy at the rope-walk as we had left them, and sing-

ing merrily to each other; the sun was shining as brightly as it had done before, and we seemed come into a new world! so great was the contrast of the present animated scene with the solitude we had just quitted. Never shall I forget the agreeable feelings excited by the change, notwithstanding we had highly enjoyed our adventure."

As Fanny concluded her little history of the Peak Cavern, they entered the parlour at the Hall, and found their parents had already commenced breakfast.

“Well ! what are the adventures of the morning ?” said Mr. W. as he looked at the animated countenances of his children, glowing with health and joy. “Good morning, papa ; adventures innumerable !” exclaimed Maria and Lucy in a breath ; “We have explored Poole’s Hole, attended by old women, with long resinous sticks in their hands, which, when lighted, answered the purpose of torches ; we have scrambled over rocks and stones, and stalagmites ; and we penetrated it as far as the pillar,

called the Queen of Scots' Pillar, because it is said, that Queen Mary penetrated it so far; but, as neither of our old women could have been living at that period, it is quite impossible, notwithstanding all they say, that they should be quite certain of the truth of this report. "As soon as, and indeed before, Mr. W. had been entertained with half the intended account of this wonderful cavern, the little ones had flocked around him, anxious to display their treasures, which consisted of

flowers, and little fossils, or petrified shells, they had picked up among the limestone on Grimlow Hill. Emily, in the mean time, had waited with exemplary patience to tell her tale, for she longed to excite an interest on behalf of the grateful Ellen, as she termed her, and only waited for a favourable moment to begin. But no pause ensued: each had so much to say, that poor Emily, for some time, deferred it in vain; but at length, as the attention of the company turned upon the



specimens that had been procured, she seized the wished-for opportunity, and exclaimed, "And now, papa, will you answer my questions, and tell me what is Blue John?" This singular name produced silence; her sisters, attracted by the novelty of the term, were equally anxious with herself for an explanation, and looked at their father, waiting his reply. "Here," continued Emily, uncovering the fern leaves, "Here is a bit of Blue John; Ellen told me it was called 'Blue John;'

and that it came from the Odin mine." "Blue John, as it is vulgarly termed, is a valuable species of fluor spar," said Mr. W. "and on account of its extraordinary beauty is wrought into a variety of elegant forms: such as urns, vases, columns, and candlesticks, which you have no doubt noticed at some of the spar shops in this place." "Oh! yes, papa, that we have!" "But here," said Emily, "is something of greater value, in my opinion however, even than Blue John: not a diamond from

Gani, or Golconda, but a *Buxton* diamond!" continued she, taking the little treasure out of her basket. "Ah, these little quartz crystals are to be met with among some of the limestone rocks in this county; and they are valuable from their rarity, as well as from the difficulty of finding them, to those who are not familiar with the particular places where they are to be procured. They are, in reality, crystals of a spar called quartz, but are locally termed, Derbyshire or *Buxton* diamonds,

if you please," added he, smiling, "from their brilliant appearance and similarity to those of a more valuable nature. But where did you procure them, my love; and who is Ellen?" Emily had now the long-wished-for gratification of reciting the narrative, in which she had taken so affectionate an interest, and described with much animation the little retreat she had visited; painted in glowing colours the gratitude of Ellen; and concluded by wishing, that one who seemed so anxious

to improve herself, and so desirous of becoming useful, could be placed in a situation more advantageous than her present home. An interest was soon awakened, as her young benefactor had desired, on behalf of a girl, who would so generously deny herself an indulgence, for the sake of her grandmother; and it was agreed, that, as Ellen had promised to display her diamonds at the Hall, she should be had in the parlour, and questioned as to her character and attainments; and, that, if

they answered Emily's description, she should be patronized by the young ladies, and put to a suitable school at Buxton; to which her grandmother had not the means of sending her. Things being thus settled entirely to Emily's satisfaction, she began to arrange her specimens, under the direction of her mother, and to attach little tickets to each of them, in order to distinguish its name. "I know, 'mamma," said she, "that all minerals, that is, earths, soils, stones, and metals, are divided into

four classes. Earthy minerals are such as are without taste and smell, and light and brittle, as chalks, sapphires, rubies, and emeralds. Saline minerals are such as have a pungent taste, and are heavier and softer than the earthy minerals, and partly transparent, as salt, alum, and salt-petre. Inflammable minerals are such as are light and brittle, opaque, and never feel cold, as coal, sulphur, black-lead, and amber; and metallic minerals are such as are heavy, opaque, cold, ductile,

that is, capable of making wire ; and malleable, that is, capable of being worked into shape, as gold, silver, and so on. All this I have read in the Universal Preceptor ; and when I reach home, mamma, I intend to appropriate four drawers in my little cabinet entirely to mineralogy : the first shall contain the earthy minerals ; the second, the saline ; the third, the inflammable ; and the fourth, the metallic minerals. That will be *order*, you know, and you are as great a friend, I believe,



to order and arrangement, as to prudence and prudent foresight. Here, in the first place, are my Buxton diamonds—thanks to the Ellen of Grimlow Hill! they will obtain a place in the first drawer, as they belong to the class of earthy minerals, perfectly agreeing with the description, void of taste and smell, light and brittle. Then there is this curious looking substance, which Ellen said was a bit of *stuff*, called *bitumen*. Are not elastic bitumen and mineral pitch the same thing, mamma? is

it not an inflammable substance?" "It is, my love," said her mother. "Then it must go into the third drawer, among the combustible or inflammable minerals," said Emily; "and here are specimens of the ores of various metals: I believe there are twenty-seven different metals: and they are all, of course, contained in the fourth class, consequently in the fourth drawer in my cabinet. I will endeavour to procure specimens of each of them; here is one of zinc, and one of

copper, and one of lead; I wonder whether I could procure one of tin—tin is such a useful mineral; oh! indeed I must endeavour to procure a specimen of tin-ore.” Emily always acted from the impulse of the moment; and, though her mother told her, that, as there were no tin-mines in Derbyshire, it was not at all likely that she could procure any tin-ore, she tied on her straw hat, that was lying beside her, and sallied forth, intending to visit every mineral or spar shop in

Buxton, in hopes of procuring a specimen of tin-ore.

We cannot pretend to say how well she succeeded in this enterprize ; it probably was not crowned with more success than her attempt to enter Poole's Hole had been ; however, the minerals were, we believe, arranged in due time, whether the tin ore was or was not one of the number ; and by one o'clock, when Donald brought the poney-chaise to the door, Emily had completed her little arrangements and was ready for a ride.

The next day our juvenile party made an excursion to Castleton, and visited the far-famed Peak, of which Fanny had given such an interesting account the morning before: Emily, we understand, rode the dun poney; entered the subterranean cavity, and even crossed the stream, under the projecting rock, in the little shallow boat, without betraying the least symptom of fear, and returned highly gratified with the adventure. How easily are things, the most difficult in idea, accom-

plished, if we set about them in good earnest! We do not mean, that this remark should apply only to entering, or exploring, one of the Derbyshire caverns, but we would wish every little girl to reflect that perseverance and resolution will often enable us to surmount obstacles which had previously appeared of too formidable a nature to be overcome. How much do they gain who possess these happy qualities! how much do they lose who are destitute of them!

A few days after, our young

party made a similar excursion to Wormhill, a pretty little village about five miles from Buxton, in order to survey the grand beauties of Chee Tor, a stupendous rock, beneath which the little river Wye meanders over rugged fragments, forming altogether a most romantic scene, which is generally visited by parties resident at Buxton, or at least by those who are fond of the sublime beauties of nature. When they returned in the evening from this ride, Donald entered the room and stated that a

little girl had been to the Hall, during their absence, to enquire if Miss W. were at home, said that she had some Buxton diamonds she wished to show her, and seemed much disappointed that she could not meet with her. "Oh, it was Ellen, no doubt," said Emily, "and perhaps, poor girl, she imagines we have quite left Buxton. Let us go to Grimlow Hill directly; will you accompany us, papa? will you go with us, and then you can see the hut in the limestone rock?—you can see how neatly it is



scooped out—how industrious its architect must have been—and judge for yourself of Ellen's merit," continued she, and her fine eyes were lighted up with benevolence. "I am sure you will own, papa, that the girl who takes such care of her little brothers, who cards wool from morning to night to procure a livelihood for them, and who is willing to go barefooted in order to purchase a pair of blankets for her old grandmother, can be a girl of no ordinary merit." "But," said Mr. W. "I thought that the

sale of the diamonds was to be kept a secret until the blankets were procured, that she might be agreeably surprised." "So it was," said Emily, "therefore how shall we manage? if we go to the hut and talk to Ellen about them, the old woman will overhear us, and Ellen's laudable secret will be unravelled." "Though I am by no means a friend to secrets in general, as they augur something of a close suspicious temper," said Mr. W. "I am willing with you, my love, to term this a *laudable* secret,

and to make an exception to my general rule. Suppose we defer our walk till to-morrow morning, when the old woman will probably be conducting some party into the cavern, and we will watch for an opportunity of visiting Ellen during her absence."

"Thank you, papa! this is an excellent scheme!" "I wish to-morrow was come!"

To-morrow, or at least Emily's to-morrow, arrived in due course; the morning was fine, and some of the young people, attended by their father, retraced their

walk across the fields towards Poole's Hole. They found the old woman was engaged in attending another party in the cavern, and, on reaching the hut, discovered Ellen preparing potatoes for their homely dinner. She curtsied as soon as she saw Emily, and with the corner of her apron dusted the only two chairs that the little dwelling could produce, begging the gentleman would take a seat. "I have found a few more Buxton diamonds, Miss," said she, "which I took to the Hall yesterday, but you were

from home. Here they are," continued she, fetching them from Charley's room. Mr. W. was extremely pleased with Ellen's appearance and with the modest replies she made to all the questions he put to her. "I long for the blankets to be really and actually purchased, papa," said Emily; "and, although the diamonds are not quite so large as some I have seen, I will give Ellen a shilling a-piece for them; that will bring her seven shillings, and this sum, added to the sum already in her possession, will

be sufficient to procure them." Ellen's heart bounded with joy when Emily put the seven shillings into her hand, but her modest and half-wishful look evinced that she had some further request to make, prevented only by the fear of venturing too far upon the kindness of her new friends. "What do you wish to say?" asked Emily, observing her countenance. "If I might, Miss, —if I might, —if it would not be asking too much, I would beg you to buy the blankets for me, at Mrs.

Wright's, because you would know so much better than I should what would be suitable." "That I will, with pleasure," replied Emily, quickly, "or, at least, my sister Fanny will, I am sure; for, as she is used to purchase blankets for the poor people at home, you may depend upon her judgment, much more than upon mine; and we will go directly, and buy the blankets, that they may be sent to you, and put upon your grandmother's bed before she returns home." Ellen, overcome with joy, burst into

tears ; “ This is a much greater pleasure to me,” said she, with characteristic simplicity, “ than if I had all the diamonds that are to be found in the neighbourhood of Buxton, and I thank you a hundred times for all your kindness.” Mr. W. and his daughter now left the little habitation, and they returned by a circuitous route, in order to take Mrs. Wright’s in their way. “ I have just thought of such a good plan,” exclaimed Emily, after a longer silence than she usually maintained : “ Do you



know, papa, I think we had better buy a pair of thick shoes, and send up to Grimlow Hill, with the blankets; it will be such an agreeable surprise to Ellen, who, I dare say, never thought of such a thing; and such a convincing proof of our approbation of her gratitude to her grandmother." The plan was readily adopted by Mr. W. "I will pay for the shoes," said he, "for I am glad, my dear children, to be the rewarder of merit, in any station of life."

The blankets and thick-

soled shoes were purchased, and conveyed to the hut in a very short time; indeed, so speedily was the whole affair accomplished, that the former were placed upon the old woman's bed before she returned home. However, when she saw the new shoes, and discovered the nice warm blankets, she could scarcely credit Ellen's assurance that the latter were purchased entirely by the money she had procured, by the sale of the Buxton Diamonds; and was equally at a loss to know where the shoes came from.

“Let us go to the Hall directly, then,” said she, as soon as Ellen had disclosed the secret, “and thank the kind young ladies.”

So they sat out immediately, and were introduced to Mr. W. and his family, as soon as they reached the Hall.—“This,” said Ellen, modestly advancing towards him, “is the grandmother who has been so kind to her six little orphans!” “And this,” said the old woman, in a tone in which she strove to hide her emotion,

“ is the Grateful Ellen, the best, the very best of grand-daughters! who has been earning a pair of blankets for me by her own industry; and who is come to thank you for the pair of shoes you have had the goodness to give her.” “ A pair of shoes is but a poor reward for *such* merit!” said Mr. W. “ but Ellen enjoys the exquisite consciousness of having acted rightly, and this, to such a mind as hers, is far superior to any gift that wealth could purchase! May all, who with since-

city and affection, like your own, endeavour to discharge their duty, to those entrusted to their care, like you, enjoy the delightful recompense of a *Grateful Ellen!*”

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